Step.41
His Circumstances
YOUR MOM'S BEEN HOSPITALIZED...
I-IS SHE OKAY?
IT'S FROM OVERWORKING HERSELF...
SHE'S BEEN TOLD TO REST AT THE HOSPITAL FOR A WEEK
THEN, KAZUMA'S BEEN WATCHING OVER HER?
YEAH.
HE SAID HE'D TAKE CARE OF MOM AND THE HOUSE AS WELL.
HE WOULDN'T EVEN LET ME MAKE THE FOOD.
HE SAID HE'D DO IT.

SO THAT'S HOW IT WAS.
.....
KAZUMA'S FAMILY ONLY HAS A SINGLE PARENT.
THEIR MOM COLLAPSING MUST BE PRETTY SCARY FOR THEM BOTH...
HEY, SUMIRE-CHAN, YOU HAVEN'T EATEN YET, RIGHT?

WHY DON'T I MAKE SOME-THING FOR YOU?
EH!? ARE YOU SURE?
I'LL MAKE A WHOLE BUNCH, SO EAT IT TOGETHER WITH KAZUMA.
YAY! I'M SO HAPPY!
AH, THEN CAN I HELP YOU?
ONII-CHAN WOULDN'T LET ME BE-CAUSE HE SAID IT WAS DAN-GEROUS.
LIKE THE OPEN FLAME AND KNIVES.
IS THAT SO...? WELL, DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT TOO MUCH. LET'S HURRY AND GO BUY...
IT'S OKAY.

NO NEED TO TROU-BLE YOUR-SELF.
AH...
ONII-CHAN.
WEL-COME HOME.
YUUTA, YOU CAME OVER.
SORRY I DIDN'T REPLY TO YOUR MES-SAGES.
N-NO, IT'S FINE.

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DO YOU NEED SOME-THING?
EH? SOME-THING?
.....
HEY, YUU-KUN CAME OVER TO BRING YOU HAND-OUTS.
YOU DON'T NEED TO USE THAT TONE.
AH, SO THAT'S WHAT IT WAS.
...IT'S KINDA
LIKE HE'S IN A BAD MOOD ...?
I GUESS I SHOULDN'T HAVE COME AFTER ALL.
AH, STUFF FROM THE HOSPI-TAL?
GOOD WORK!

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ANYWAY, IF IT'S DINNER, I'LL MAKE IT.
EH? NO, IT'S OKAY.
ONII-CHAN, YOU SHOULD REST.
YUU-KUN ALREADY OFFERED TO MAKE IT.
IT'S FINE IF I HELP OUT, RIGHT?
YOU'LL GET HURT IMMEDIATELY, SO NO.
DON'T MAKE ME WORRY.
JEEZ, YOU'RE SO OVER-PROTECTIVE!
I'M ALREADY IN 7TH GRADE.
IT'S ALRIGHT, KAZUMA.
I'LL PROPERLY SUPERVISE HER.
AH,
.....
LET ME GO PUT THIS STUFF AWAY.
カチャ

YUI,
YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO THIS FAR.
BUT YOUR FAMILY'S IN A TOUGH SPOT, RIGHT?
.....
BECAUSE IT'S MY FAMILY, I'LL HANDLE IT MY-SELF.
DON'T HOLD BACK.
IF IT'S CURRY OR SOME-THING, IT'D BE EASY.
KAZUMA, AREN'T YOU TIRED?
YOUR FACE LOOKS PALE...
JUST REST FOR A...

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...AH.
...SOR-
RY.
I SAID
TOO
MUCH.
N-NO...

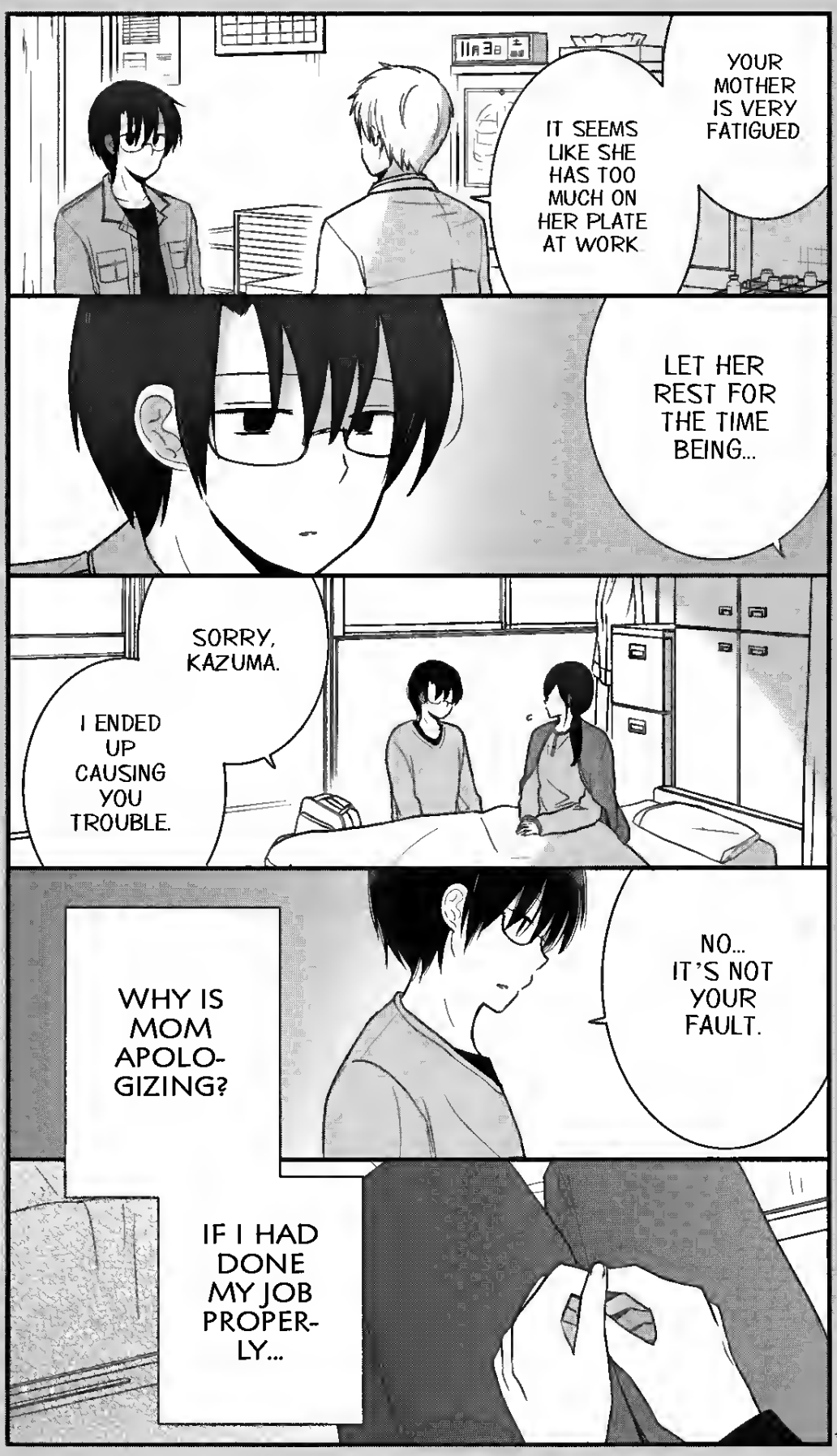
BUT REALLY, IT'S OKAY.
IF I NEED SOME-THING, THEN I'LL ASK YOU.
ONII-CHAN? YOU'RE STILL OUTSIDE?
ガチャッ
DID SOME-THING HAPPEN?
AH, IT'S NOTHING.
...SOR-RY. I'LL COOK FOR YOU SOME OTHER TIME.
PARDON THE DISTUR-BANCE. SEE YA...
EH? O-OKAY...

THAT FACE.
IT'S THE FIRST TIME I'VE SEEN IT.
I WANT TO SUPPORT HIM, BUT DOING MORE...
!?
ARE YOU OKAY?

ONII-CHAN!?

KAZUMA
SUMIRE
FROM NOW ON, IT'S JUST THE THREE OF US, SO WE HAVE TO DO OUR BEST, OKAY?
WHAT ABOUT DAD?
DAD'S NOT HERE ANYMORE
EH? I DON'T LIKE THIS...
DON'T WORRY FROM NOW ON, I'LL TRY MY HARDEST
I'LL PROTECT THIS FAMILY.

MOM, YOU SHOULD TAKE A BREAK
EH? BUT...
IT'S BUSY AT WORK RIGHT NOW, RIGHT?
THANK YOU.
IF THEY WERE HAPPY, I WAS HAPPY.
IF THEY ASKED FOR HELP, I WAS EVEN HAPPIER.
BUT...
HOSPI-TALIZED?


YOUR MOTHER IS VERY FATIGUED
IT SEEMS LIKE SHE HAS TOO MUCH ON HER PLATE AT WORK
LET HER REST FOR THE TIME BEING...
SORRY, KAZUMA.
I ENDED UP CAUSING YOU TROUBLE.
NO... IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT.
WHY IS MOM APOLO-GIZING?
IF I HAD DONE MY JOB PROPER-LY...

I...
...MA
KAZUMA.
!.....
YOU'RE AWAKE?
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EH? YUI...
ゴソ
ガバッ
ONII-CHAN!
THANK GOD YOU WOKE UP!!
YOU COLLAPSED IN THE DOORWAY.
DON'T YOU REMEMBER?
...YUUTA, WHAT HAP-PENED?

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YOU HAVEN'T SLEPT A LOT IN THE PAST THREE DAYS, RIGHT?
OF COURSE YOU'D COL-LAPSE.
I'M SORRY FOR SCARING YOU.
YEAH...
MY BAD. BUT I'M OKAY NOW.
HUH? YOU'RE GETTING UP AL-READY!?
REALLY, IT'S FINE, ONII-CHAN.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO ANY-THING!
JUST SLEEP!

キョト…
I'M SORRY, ONII-CHAN.
EVER... SINCE I WAS LITTLE, I'VE ALWAYS ACTED LIKE A SPOILED CHILD...
SO MUCH SO THAT MOM AND EVEN YOU COL-LAPSED.
CAN YOU PLEASE LET ME HELP OUT GOING FOR-WARD?

...I SAID IT'S FINE. YOU DON'T NEED TO LIFT A FINGER.
BUT
KAZUMA,
I GET THAT YOU WANT TO TRY YOUR HARDEST FOR YOUR FAMILY,
BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO EVERY-THING ON YOUR OWN.
IF YOU END UP HURTING YOURSELF... THEN THERE'S NO POINT.
ポロ

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AND IF THAT HAPPENS, YOUR MOM AND SUMIRE-CHAN
WOULD BOTH BE TERRI-BLY SAD.
THAT'S RIGHT...
SORRY.
BUT
MOM COLLAPS-ING WAS MY FAULT...

SHE WAS PUSHING HERSELF TOO HARD, AND I FAILED TO NOTICE,
I'LL PROTECT THIS FAMILY.
EVEN THOUGH I RESOLVED TO PROTECT THEM.
KAZUMA.

I'LL PROTECT THEM.
I'LL PROTECT THEM.
YOUR MOM AND SUMIRE-CHAN
AND US AS WELL.

THAT SHOULD BE ENOUGH.
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...YOU'RE STARTING TO LOOK BETTER ALREADY.
COMPARED TO BEFORE
MAYBE BECAUSE I SLEPT A BIT?
I KNOW! IN THE MEANTIME, I'LL MAKE US SOME CURRY.
ME TOO. I'LL HELP.
I PROM-ISE NOT TO GET HURT!
AH... COME TO THINK OF IT, I AM HUNGRY.
THEN, LET'S EAT!

IT'S DELI-CIOUS.
RIGHT!?
I MADE A WHOLE BUNCH, SO FOR NOW, YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT FOOD.
LET'S MAKE SOME TOGETHER AGAIN, YUU-KUN.
AH, IT'S THE PHONE.
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ﾅﾅﾅ…
110
9
110
9…

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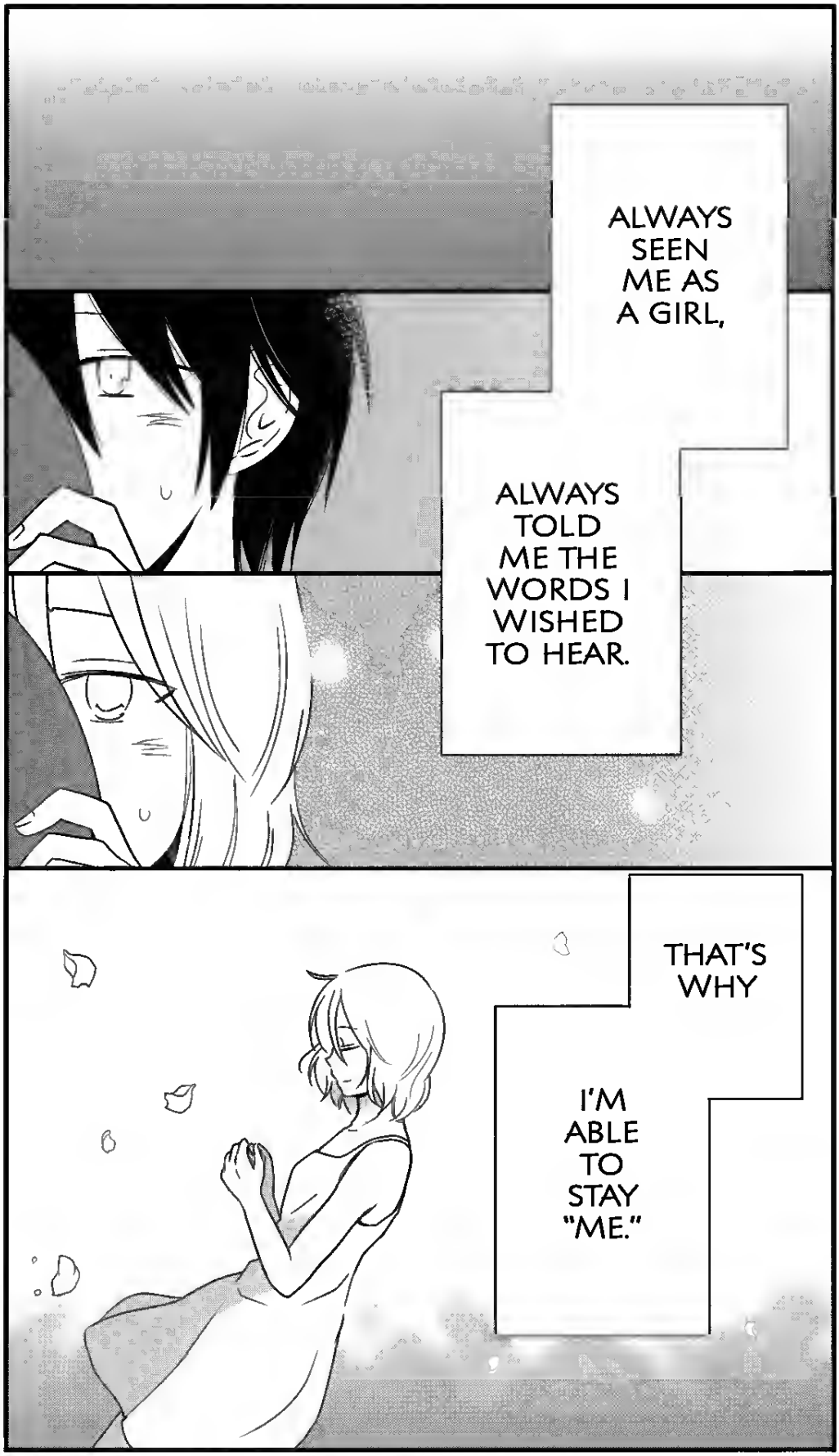
SORRY, YUI. I ENDED UP CAUSING YOU TROUBLE.
ABSO-LUTELY NOT!
IT'S COM-PLETELY ALRIGHT. RATHER...
I'M ALSO SORRY FOR NOT REALIZING WHAT WAS HAPPENING WITH HIS FAMILY.
I GOT CAUGHT UP THINK-ING THAT HE AND KOIZU-MI-SAN STARTED DATING.
?
I-I'M REALLY SORRY TOO.
うぅ…
I'M SUCH AN IDIOT
...BUT I CAN'T TELL HIM.
SERI-OUSLY, IF YOU CAN, PLEASE TALK TO US ABOUT THESE KINDS OF THINGS.
EVEN THOUGH I MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO HELP.

YOU'VE ALWAYS HELPED US,
SO I WANT TO SUPPORT YOU TOO.
カチャ
YEAH...
BUT
...IT'S JUST THAT IT'S A BIT EMBAR-RASS-ING.
A GUY ASKING A GIRL FOR A FAVOR.

!!?
ばっ
...SAYING THAT
SO SUD-DENLY,

NO FAIR.
THAT CAUGHT ME OFF GUARD... REFER-RING TO ME AS A GIRL.
BUT
THAT'S RIGHT. KAZUMA HAS


ALWAYS SEEN ME AS A GIRL,
ALWAYS TOLD ME THE WORDS I WISHED TO HEAR.
THAT'S WHY
I'M ABLE TO STAY "ME."
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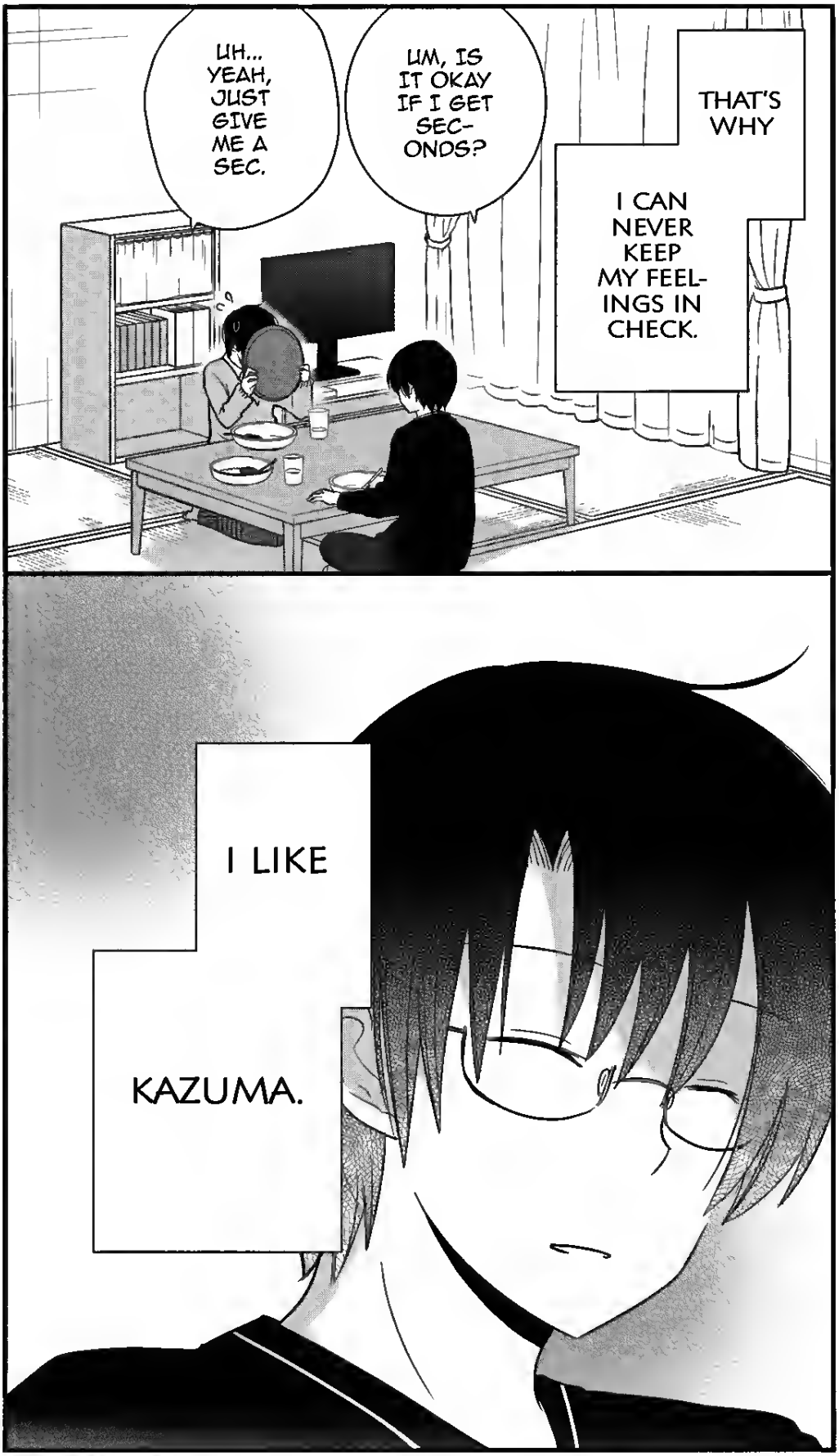
UH... YEAH, JUST GIVE ME A SEC.
UM, IS IT OKAY IF I GET SEC-ONDS?
THAT'S WHY
I CAN NEVER KEEP MY FEEL-INGS IN CHECK.
I LIKE
KAZUMA.
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SHISYUNKI

BITTER CHANGE

POLARIS COMICS / MASAYOSHI

Shishunki Bitter Change

Raws

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